

CATAWBA COUNTY  
GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF COUNTY OWNED VEHICLES  
EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2002

The following guidelines are established to regulate the use of County vehicles assigned to County employees in the performance of their duties.

These policies are intended to clearly define standard operating procedures for use, care, and maintenance of County owned vehicles.

**Use of County Owned Vehicles**

A. Permitted Uses

1. County employees, auxiliary drivers or authorized drivers may drive or operate County vehicles and equipment. Each Department Head or Division Manager will submit a list of authorized drivers.
2. County owned vehicles shall be used for Official County business only.
3. No passengers will be permitted unless they are on Official County business.

B. Driver Requirements

1. Each driver of any county owned vehicle must have a valid North Carolina driver's license. County employees who are drivers of vehicles weighing more than 26,000 pounds or a vehicle made to carry more than sixteen passengers must have a valid CDL.
2. Completion of the County's driving course or recognized equivalent will be required of employees operating County vehicles. Risk Management will determine when each employee / authorized driver will need to attend to defensive driving program.
3. Employees will be responsible for any vehicle or equipment assigned to them, including cleanliness and maintenance.
4. Employees driving County vehicles are required to obey all traffic laws including wearing seat belts in compliance with seat belt laws.
5. Catawba County will not pay traffic tickets or parking fines of employees driving County owned vehicles, or if the employee is authorized to use their personal vehicle on County business. Employees found guilty of a moving violation may be subject to disciplinary action by their supervisor and shall be required to complete the County's defensive driving course.

C. Vehicle Assignment

1. County vehicles are normally assigned to an individual at the start of their work period and are the employee's responsibility until the completion of the assigned work period.
2. A County vehicle may be assigned to an individual employee who regularly requires vehicular transportation in the performance of his assigned duties and responsibilities. The assignment may be of a permanent nature or for a specified time period, such as a

week of on-call duty.

3. During vacation periods or leaves of absences, an employee who is assigned a vehicle on a non-permanent basis, will turn the vehicle in to their department.

D. Personal Use of County Vehicles

1. No employee may use the vehicle assigned to him/her for personal business.
2. When the vehicle is not being used for County business purposes, it is to be kept on the premises of Catawba County except as specifically exempted by a Department Head / Division Manager.
3. Only the following employees will be authorized to drive County Vehicles to their homes:
  1. Animal Control Officer on call
  2. Emergency Services Director / EMS Manager
  3. EMS personnel authorized by Emergency Services Dir./ EMS Mgr.
  4. Fire Marshall or Inspector on Call
  5. Sheriff and Deputies – Jailers not included
  6. Fleet Manager / Fleet Maintenance on call person
  7. Facilities Maintenance Supervisor – on call personnel
  8. D.S.S. Group Homes and Mental Health Group Homes
  9. Landfill Supervisor / Co-Generation on call person
4. An employee's title or position will not be regarded as justification for taking a County vehicle home; rather, justification is to be based on the above criteria without regard to official capacity.

## **Accident Policy**

Fleet Maintenance Manager / Parts Manager

Accident review:

1. The Risk Manager shall review each accident within (30) days of the date of the accident and shall review the officer's report, the driver's statement and any other pertinent information.
2. A driver may petition to present support material or witnesses to the Risk Manager to assist in the interpretation of the accident.
3. The review and consideration of a case by the Risk Manager will include the following elements:
  - a. The past driving record of the driver;
  - b. The report of the investigating officer;
  - c. The driver's report;
  - d. Oral presentation by the driver, if needed or requested;
  - e. Supporting materials or the testimony of witnesses, if warranted;
  - f. The department head's or the designated representative's report of accident.

#### Penalties:

Upon finding that the driver is involved in a preventable accident, the Risk Manager will recommend the appropriate personnel action to the employee's supervisor as governed by the Vehicular Code and set forth in the Personnel Code.

Regardless of the situation, the following procedures must be followed in the event of an accident.

1. Immediate notification of proper law enforcement agency for accident investigation and report. (This is required for any accident involving a County vehicle regardless of the amount of damage)
2. Immediate notification of Fleet Maintenance Manager / Parts Manager.
3. Immediate notification of the Department Head or delegate of the Department Head.
4. Notification of Risk Manager by the Department Head within 24 hours of accident.
5. Preparation of a Catawba County Injury / Exposure Report. This report must be completed legibly in quadruplicate. This report along with three copies of the law enforcement agency report and narrative statement of supervisor should be turned in to the Fleet Manager / Risk Manager for review.
6. Forward the appropriate copy of the accident report and injury / exposure form to Risk Management for a Worker's Compensation claim if there were any personal injuries.
7. The above forms are required to be filed within 3 business days of an accident. Upon completion of the accident review, the Supervisor will notify the employee of the action taken. Failure to file the proper reports can result in loss of County vehicle driving privileges, suspension, demotion or dismissal.
8. Finally, the employee involved in an accident is responsible to obtain three (3) damage repair estimates and turn them in to the Fleet Manager within 72 hours of the accident. If the employee is unable to perform this requirement, then the Supervisor is responsible

#### **Operation and Care of County Vehicles**

##### A. Cleaning of Vehicles

1. Vehicles must be kept clean at all times. It is the assigned drivers obligation and responsibility to maintain the vehicle in clean condition. Car washes and other appearance conditions are the responsibility of the driver.

##### B. Maintenance of Vehicles

1. A vehicle number will be assigned by the garage and affixed to the right front of vehicles for easy identification. (Exception will be specialty use vehicles for the Sheriffs Department)
2. Each employee assigned a County owned vehicle is responsible for making an appointment and insuring periodic maintenance of the vehicle by the County Garage. The driver is obligated to schedule the appointment when the vehicle mileage is within 500

miles of the next service, **which is indicated on a sticker on the inside of the top left side of the windshield.**

3. Repairs other than scheduled maintenance, which are non-safety or non-mission essential, must be submitted on a maintenance request form. These will normally be completed at the next scheduled maintenance interval or at the Part's Manager / Fleet Maintenance Manager's discretion.

4. Emergency repairs during normal working hours will be completed by Fleet Maintenance with EMS and then the Sheriff's Department vehicles given top priority.

5. Garage personnel will be on call from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 a.m. Monday – Friday, each weekend and all holidays. Emergency repairs after normal working hours will be performed on EMS vehicles only (exception will be patrol vehicles when needed) when no spare vehicles are available. This will be scheduled by contacting the Communications Center, which will in turn contact the Fleet employee that is on call. If there is no response, have the Communications Center to page the Fleet Manager. The Garage will not perform repairs on any other County vehicle during non-working hours without the approval of the Fleet Manager or on call Fleet Maintenance person.

A. The following work is authorized to be performed by non-Fleet personnel by use of the vehicle credit card after normal working hours:

- (1) Bulb replacement of head lamps, tail lamps, turn signal lamps, or brake lamps.
- (2) Heater or radiator hoses.
- (3) Flat tires
- (4) Wiper blades or de-icer during inclement weather.
- (5) Drive belts.

6. The Part's Manager or on-call Fleet Maintenance employee ***are the only people authorized to have wrecker service called on a County vehicle when vehicle is inoperable due to mechanical failure.*** The Fleet Manager / Parts Manager or personnel on call may be reached by calling the County Communication Center. If vehicle is out of the County the Garage should be contacted for advise when possible.

7. Credit cards and Access Numbers for County fuel sites are issued by the Garage to each vehicle. The driver is responsible for these cards and must turn them in to the Garage if the driver is assigned another vehicle. Also, it is the driver's responsibility to take note of the credit card expiration date. New credit cards will be issued by the

Parts Manager when received. The Garage will contact Departments concerned when cards are available.

8. Special equipment installed on the vehicle (snow chains, fire extinguishers, flashlights, gas card, credit cards and first aid kits) must stay within that vehicle at all times, and will be inventoried when a change of drivers is made. Drivers are responsible for security of these items.

1. During severe winter weather, the Garage will install snow tires and chains on County vehicles. Snow tires will be installed by the Garage by a specified date to be determined by the Fleet Manager/Part Manager. Subsequent removal or change of

snow tires can be scheduled at Fleet Maintenance depending upon the workload or contracted with a private tire dealer at the department's expense. When weather conditions warrant snow chains, the Fleet Manager / Parts Manager will notify concerned departments and arrange for vehicles authorized for chains, to be brought to Fleet Maintenance for installation. All shifts (Sheriff's Dept.) will report to the Fleet at that time. Vehicles needing chains after this time will be required to take them to a service station that accepts one of the vehicles credit cards, to have the chains installed or removed.

2. The following items are the responsibility of the driver to have replaced or repaired by outside (non-County) services:
  - (1) Flat tires
  - (2) Installation or repair of Radio (County owned) equipment
  - (3) Washing or other appearance maintenance to vehicle
11. Fleet Maintenance will schedule other outside (Non-County) work (i.e. suspension alignment, upholstery repair, warranty work, exhaust system repair etc) . It will be the driver's responsibility to have the vehicle at the contracted service at the designated time and to also pick-up the vehicle when finished.
12. Fleet Maintenance is not responsible for personal items which are lost or stolen, when the vehicle is serviced at Fleet Maintenance or at an outside contracted service.
13. Warranty booklet, tag registration cards (or copy), state inspection certificate and owners manuals must remain in the vehicle's glove compartment at all times.
14. No County employee is authorized to alter any equipment installed in a County vehicle or repair any County vehicle.
15. Scheduled services generally will not be performed without at least 5 days notification.

#### C. Spare Vehicles

1. There are spare vehicles at Fleet Maintenance, which may be borrowed during times of major maintenance to an assigned vehicle. The availability of a spare vehicle is at the discretion of the Fleet Manager / Parts Manager.
2. Any required maintenance to a spare vehicle must be reported to Fleet Maintenance on a vehicle maintenance request immediately.
3. Please do not return the spare vehicle to Fleet Maintenance without filling the fuel tank completely.
4. If a spare vehicle is not available, the driver is responsible for requesting assistance from their supervisor. Fleet Maintenance is **not obligated** for locating a vehicle for a driver, each department is responsible to make arrangements for a substitute vehicle for the duration of any repairs, if a spare is not available.

#### D. Vehicle Replacement

During the Annual budget process, the Fleet Manager will work with each department in determining if a vehicle is to be removed from service. The Fleet Manager will send a written recommendation to the respective department head with a copy to the budget office, when it is determined to remove vehicles from service.

All new vehicle requests must be submitted to the Fleet Manager / Parts Manager for review / approval. The Fleet Manager will validate each departments requests for replacement vehicles as required by the Budget Department.

It is the duty and obligation of the Fleet Manager to assist each Department Head / Division Manger when vehicles are being ordered.

**CATAWBA COUNTY**  
**GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF COUNTY OWNED VEHICLES**

I have read and fully understand the guidelines for the use of County owned vehicles and agree to comply with these guidelines.

**Signed**\_\_\_\_\_

**Department**\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**\_\_\_\_\_